

KNIXON

TOP SECRET

151-CAGWU

21 November 1950

SUBJECT: First Operational-Commo Flight - HBPixie

TO: Chief, VLKiva
Washington, D. C.

INFO: Chief, VLKiva
[]

Attn: []

Attn: [] []

Reference: BGFiend

1. The enclosure to this dispatch is a critique by []
[] of the first operational flight of the commo plane.
This flight has been the subject of [] [], paras 2 and 3,
and [] []

2. While in some minute details a certain lack of planning
might be involved (e.g. there was no reason for an experienced
crew to take off on a long cold night flight without food or drink),
on the whole it definitely appears to [] [] that -- as pre-
viously stated -- the whole commo plan is operationally impossible;
and that it must be changed even more drastically than recommended
in paragraph 10 (f) of enclosure. The real solution is many more
planes or, better, W/T.

1 Encl:
Memo, [] 1 to [] [], 16 Nov 50
(3 copies, 3 pages ea.)

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Encl to Disp. 151-CAGWU, 21 Nov 50

MEMORANDUM

16 November 1950

SUBJECT: First Operational-Commo Flight - HBPixie

FROM: []

TO: []

1. At 1800 hours 15 November 1950 the communications craft departed TPCumber for the HBPixie coastline to attempt VHF voice contact with the Central and North Teams dropped 11 November. The flight returned to LCDrink at 0205 hours 16 November 1950. This is a report of my observations.

2. Unforecasted head-winds delayed our arrival at the first point of contact by some 20 minutes (See Radio Operator's log for exact details); nevertheless signals were transmitted from 1945 to 2115 hours while the craft was at 12,000 feet altitude. In this instance the prescribed time of contact was 2000 hours. As the log reveals, the results were negative -- no contact whatsoever.

3. For the next 3 hours and 45 minutes the craft consumed time (until the second or North Team contact at 0000) by milling about the Identity (1) at 10,000 feet, mostly on the eastern fringe of KMULcer.

4. The second contact -- made exactly on time at 12,000 feet over a point previously decided upon as the position of maximum effectiveness -- was equally unsuccessful.

why? 5. From my experiences this flight as it was flown to meet a 4-hour spread in broadcasts was unnecessarily demanding. I have no doubt that if the governments from Southern HBFairy to Eastern UTDream enjoy any vigilance whatsoever, news of a blacked-out aircraft floating over the narrow confines of the Western Identity (1) for six or more hours could not be hidden for long. This was anything but a clever show of deception.

6. The elongated duration of the mission violated all JBAalert regulations for flying safety. With less than an hour's supply of fuel remaining when the flight was completed, there was no margin of safety at all. Had any weather developed in the LCDrink area, one aircraft and everything aboard would have been ditched. The ensuing furor of such an incident is fearfully obvious.

7. Further, the flight -- made in outside air temperatures of minus 23° centigrade and at oxygen-using altitudes -- was fatiguing and uncomfortable to all aboard. The Radio Operator, forced to remain for long

periods in the

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periods in the nearly unheated cabin, was improperly clothed. He must be supplied with some type of winter flying clothes.

8. Except for the thinking kindness of the aircraft commander who stocked several candy bars, there was no food aboard. Three members of the party had no time to eat before departure. Bored, tired, hungry, cold and disappointed in our radio efforts, 8 such hours are too long to endure without refreshments.

9. In summary:

a. The flight pattern imposed by the inflexible broadcast schedule flaunted security;

b. It violated all concepts of flying safety;

c. It was made without considerations of minimum comfort;

d. And, while the operation was nearly perfect in its execution, the mission failed.

10. I recommend that:

a. Either cabin fuel tanks be installed and the four-hour waiting stint be done west of KMULcer in a course with an ostensible destination; (Note: LCFlake tower authorities questioned the "extra-long" local flight of 15 November.)

b. Or the aircraft be permitted to land at some airfield such as Identity (2) or Identity (3) under the guise of navigation training flights, a simple ruse to lay on;

c. Or the broadcast schedules be revised to allow two contacts in quick order;

d. Further, I recommend that all non-JBAalert personnel be equipped with proper flying gear;

e. That a commissary, including hot coffee or tea, be established aboard the aircraft;

f. That a weekly broadcast schedule be revised to minimize time in this sensitive area.

11. Much is to be learned from this initial attempt. I feel that this report will be supplemented with a similar report from the Communications

Division and the

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Division and the Radio Operator's log -- both of which will substantiate the above recommendations. Certainly they reflect the opinions of the flight crew.

cc: Wash - 3
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